

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

1. Quiet your mind and heart and ask the Holy Spirit to be with you. Pray that God will help you see your inner self as he sees you -- with all your strengths and all your faults. Ask Him to help you to be absolutely honest with yourself and with the priest.
2. Spend some time examining your conscience. Consider your actions and attitudes in each area of your life. Ask yourself "Is this area of my life pleasing to God or not?"

FAITH

- daily prayer
- attendance and participation at Mass
- use of God's name
- respect for sacred persons, places and things
- ongoing religious education

FAMILY

- respectful, loving relationship with parents
- concern for brothers and sisters
- responsibility and helpfulness at home
- truthfulness
- forgiveness

SCHOOL and WORK

- respect for teachers and peers
- serious study habits
- honesty on tests and assignments
- response to criticism and correction
- punctuality and responsibility
- friendliness and kindness

FUN

- use of drugs and alcohol
- respect for property - vandalism, stealing
- responsible driving habits
- respect for authority
- choice of entertainment - movies, TV, books
- respectful language
- peer pressure

SEXUALITY and RELATIONSHIPS

- truthfulness and honesty
- respect and responsibility
- sexual control, chastity

3. Approach the priest for reconciliation (confession). Once you enter the Reconciliation Room, you will have a choice of either kneeling behind a screen or sitting face-to-face with the priest. He will welcome you in the name of Jesus and the church.

(over)

4. Make the sign of the cross with the priest. He will say: "May God who has enlightened every heart help you know your sins and to trust in his mercy."
You reply: "AMEN."
5. Confess your sins to the priest. Simply and directly talk to him about the areas of sinfulness in your life that need God's healing touch.
6. The priest will talk to you about your life, encourage you to be more faithful to God in the future, and help you decide what to do to make up for your sins -- your penance.
7. The priest will ask you to make an Act of Contrition.* You can pray in your own words, telling God that you are sorry for your sins and that you want to love him better, or you can recite this prayer:

"My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong, and in failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more and avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen."

8. The priest will extend his hands over your head and pray the church's official prayer of absolution: "God, the Father of mercies, the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
You respond: "AMEN."
9. The priest will wish you peace. Be sure to thank him as you leave.
10. Return to your place and spend some time quietly thanking God for his loving forgiveness. Don't forget to do your penance.

*During communal penance services the Act of Contrition is usually recited with the community gathered prior to entering into the Sacrament of Reconciliation.